

# **The writing on the wall: Anonymous written communication between women**

Application for 2024-25 Graduate Research and Creative Activities Grant

Master's Student: Darian Draft

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Susan Reay

Grace Abbott School of Social Work

## **I. Project Description**

### **1. Project Background and Overview**

Early research on women's communication has suggested that it is inferior to men's (Lakeoff, 1973). Although the study of women's communication patterns is relatively new, recent studies have been done to investigate this topic from a feminist perspective. A specific subset of communication called latrinalia, the study of anonymous writing left in restrooms, provides valuable insights into thematic elements present in all types of communications especially women's (Amevuvor, & Hafer, 2018). Latrinalia is specifically important to investigate, as these writings are solely intended to be seen by people who use the women's restroom, entirely removing potential biases brought on by the presence of men. A feminist viewpoint is utilized to highlight the marked individualization of the female perspective taken in creating dialogue. This case study increases reader's understanding about everyday written communication styles and thoughts shared by women in this forum. The purpose of this research is to trace and identify themes in perceptions and/or lived experiences of adult women regarding written anonymous communication in the women's restroom on UNO's campus. This qualitative study will explore the illustration of complexities in women's anonymous written communication patterns in a unique environment only observed by other women.

The proposed research builds upon an existing exploratory study conducted by Dr. Susan Reay in 2018. Original data has been collected via sticky notes left in the first-floor women's restroom at the Community Engagement Center at UNO, and more recent data (spanning from 2021-present) has been collected in the same manner. As the current manuscript is completed, we seek to conduct additional analyses and comparisons with new data. This research is consistent with qualitative case studies. This project will focus on collecting new, post-COVID data, and manuscript writing with the goal being submission for publication by the end of the summer. The majority of work for this proposal consists of data analysis and manuscript editing summer of 2025. The project outcome is publication in the journal *Affilia*, a social work feminist perspective journal.

### **2. Research Objectives**

- a. Identifying themes in women's anonymous communications
- b. Increase reader's understanding about everyday written communication styles and thoughts shared by women
- c. Compare newly collected data with existing pre-COVID data, to identify potential thematic changes
- d. Publication of this article will contribute to the limited amount of existing literature in this area

### 3. Research Methodology

This study will examine written artifacts with a plan to determine themes contained within the women's anonymous written communication. Analyses will examine themes among messages left by participants (i.e. trauma, life events, mental health). This will introduce a new perspective on women's communication analysis pre- and post-covid, to identify potential changes in thematic elements brought on by the pandemic.

Parameters of the research include the method and location of written communications. Data collection occurred on the first floor of the women's restroom at the Community Engagement Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska, USA.

### 4. Project Timeline:

Spring 2025	May 1-31	Data (2021-present) will be transferred into MAXQDA Drafting of manuscript introduction and methods sections will begin
Summer 2025	June 1-30	Data analysis in MAXQDA will begin Additional literature will be reviewed and incorporated into manuscript draft. Methodology section will be completed. Data analyses will be completed
	July 1-31	Data analyses will be added to the manuscript. Results and discussion section will be drafted Completed draft of manuscript will be reviewed and edited by Dr.Reay Manuscript will be submitted for review by publisher before the end of the month.
Fall 2025	August 1-20	Edited manuscript will be received from publisher, further analyses and edits will made as requested. Project will be resubmitted for final publication by the end of the month.

### 5. Project roles

Master's Student: Darian Draft will be responsible for data collection, data analysis. reviewing literature, manuscript writing and editing, manuscript publication. Darian will work collaboratively with the CEC for data collection and oversight.

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Susan Reay – School of Social Work, has assisted with data collection and will be overseeing analyses and authorship of the article.

## II. Budget Justification

I have not received any funding for this research or previous funding from FUSE, GRACA, or UCRCA. The request is for a \$4800 stipend plus \$200 for supplies and expenses. I am working as a graduate assistant during the school year, under a 10-month contract, meaning I will not receive funding over the summer. GRACA funding will permit me to dedicate time to working on this project outside of my administrative duties as a GA. I expect to spend 40 hours a week working on this project.

Budget Item	Proposed Activity		Justification
Personnel	May 2025	Existing Data and writing will be assessed. New data will be collected Data will be entered into MAXQDA, and analyses will begin Additional literature will be reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work 40 hours/week at \$10 per hour</li> <li>• 40 hrs x \$10 x 2 weeks = \$800</li> </ul>
	June 2025	Literature review will be completed. Introduction and methodology section of manuscript will be completed. Data analysis will be completed. Drafting of results and discussion sections of manuscript will begin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work 40 hours/week at \$10 per hour</li> <li>• 40 hrs x \$10 x 4 weeks = \$1600</li> </ul>
	July 2025	Manuscript draft will be submitted for review by the end of the month. Edited manuscript will be received from publisher, further analyses and edits will be made as requested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work 40 hours/week at \$10 per hour</li> <li>• 40 hrs x \$10 x 4 weeks = \$1600</li> </ul>
	August 2025	Final edits will be made and completed manuscript will be sent to the journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work 40 hours/week at \$10 per hour</li> <li>• 40 hrs x \$10 x 2 weeks = \$800</li> </ul>
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative data analysis software</li> <li>• Additional materials (i.e. poster printing, copying, etc.)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MAXQDA (qualitative analysis software): \$131 for 12-month student license</li> <li>• \$69 for paper, printing, other supplies</li> </ul>
<b>Total Amount</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>		<b>Materials: \$200</b>  <b>Stipend: \$4,800</b>

## References

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12/19/24

To the office of Graduate Research and Creative Activity,

I am writing to offer my support as a mentor for this project. With the assistance of my graduate assistant and current MSW student, Darian Draft, data collection and analyses can be furthered, and authorship of our prospective manuscript can be taken toward publication. I am committed to overseeing this project, and we will meet weekly to check progress and set further goals.

In addition to these weekly meetings, we will use specific metrics to track our progress, including data entry (spring 2025), data analysis (spring 2025 and early summer 2025), and drafting of article sections (summer 2025). These steps will ensure we stay on track for the successful completion and publication of our manuscript in August of 2025. I look forward to continuing to work closely with Darian and contributing to the success of this important endeavor.

I have reviewed the proposed budget for the project and can verify that the requested funds are reasonable and aligned with the scope of the work. The budget includes necessary expenses for travel, software, and materials for presentation.

Darian is well-prepared for this project due to their strong academic background and previous experience in social science research and manuscript publication/preparation. Their skills in social science research methods and data analyses, coupled with their dedication and passion for the subject, make them an excellent candidate to lead this research.

Sincerely,

Susan Reay, EdD, LICSW

Associate Professor

Director

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